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SCOTT SNYDER

RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

AMERICAN VAMPIRE

The
BLACKLIST
Part One

\$2.99 us
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suggested for
mature readers
verligocomics.com



Signature 2012

VERTIGO

California, 1954.

ALL OF US HAVE THINGS IN OUR
PAST WE HOPE WILL NEVER CATCH
UP TO US. DEMONS BACK THERE
THAT KEEP US UP AT NIGHT.

I'LL ADMIT I'VE
GOT MY SHARE.

SOMETIMES AT NIGHT, I CAN'T SLEEP BECAUSE OF
MINE. IT'S GOTTEN WORSE IN RECENT YEARS.

MAYBE IT'S
BECAUSE OF
EVERYTHING ON
THE NEWS, THE
TRIALS, BUT
LATELY, AWAKE
AT NIGHT, I
CAN FEEL THEM
BACK THERE,
GETTING
CLOSER.

I LIE THERE IN
A PANIC AND
MY HUSBAND,
HENRY, WILL
TURN TO ME
AND SMILE
AND SAY
SOMETHING
CLEVER LIKE,
"YOU'LL MISS
THE MORNING
YOU KEEP
LIVING IN
LAST NIGHT,
PEARL."

SO I TRY TO FORGET THE
MONSTERS INSIDE AND OUT,
THE ONES BEHIND ME, BEHIND US.

THE BLACKLIST

part one of six

SCOTT SNYDER writer RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE artist
DAVE MCCAIG colors JANEN K. FLETCHER letters cover by ALBUQUERQUE
MARK BOYLE editor GREGORY LOCKARD asst. editor
AMERICAN VAMPIRE created by SCOTT SNYDER & RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

LIKE RIGHT
NOW...



...RIGHT HERE, IN FRONT OF
THIS SIGN, MY INSTINCT IS
TO LOOK AT IT AND SEE ALL
THE TERRIBLE THINGS THAT
HAPPENED HERE LONG AGO.

THE NIGHT THEY ALMOST
KILLED ME FOR GOOD.
THE COLD TOUCH OF THEIR
BREATH ON MY SKIN, THE
HISSING AND LAUGHTER,
THE FANGS IN MY ARMS.

AND THAT KNIFE...
THE KNIFE IN MY BACK.



BUT THEN I HEAR HENRY IN MY
HEAD, SO I TRY TO FORGET
IT ALL. I TRY TO JUST SEE IT
AS IT LOOKS NOW.

TO SEE THE LETTERS
BRIGHT AGAINST THE DARK
HILL BEHIND, LIKE LINKS IN
A CHILD'S DAISY CHAIN.

TO SEE THEM TWINKLING SLIGHTLY IN
THE EARLY LIGHT AND FORGET THAT
EVERY TWINKLE IS A SHARD OF GLASS
EMBEDDED IN THE WOOD - GLASS FROM
ALL THE BROKEN BOTTLES THROWN AT
THE SIGN OVER THE YEARS BY PEOPLE
WHOSE DREAMS DIDN'T COME TRUE.



AND I CAN
JUST ABOUT
DO IT, TOO.



TO SEE IT RIGHT
NOW, WITH NO
HISTORY. SEE
EACH LETTER AS
A BLANK SLATE.



BUT THEN THE VAMPIRE
IN MY TRUNK STARTS
BEGGING FOR HIS LIFE...

...AND IT ALL COMES
RUSHING BACK.





THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!



TALK.

WHO SENT
YOU, AND
HOW DID YOU
FIND US?

YES, OF
COURSE...



HISsss!!!



AND SO
WE RUN...

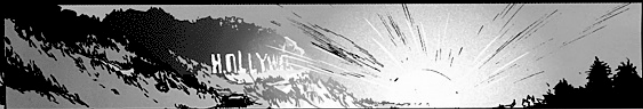
FOR THIRTY
YEARS, MY
HUSBAND AND
I HAVE BEEN
LIVING IN
HIDING FROM
VAMPIRES
LIKE THIS
ONE--
VAMPIRES
WHO WANT
ONE THING:
TO KILL ME.

TWO DAYS AGO,
THOUGH, THIS
VAMPIRE FOUND US.
HE CAME TO OUR
HOUSE DISGUISED
AS A SALESMAN
WHILE I WAS OUT
AND ATTACKED MY
HUSBAND, LEAVING
HIM FOR DEAD.

TONIGHT, I TRACKED
DOWN HIS SCENT.

MY NAME IS
PEARL PRESTON.

AND I'M AN
AMERICAN
VAMPIRE.





HOW IS HE?

THAT WAS FAST.
HENRY'S THE SAME.

I TAKE
IT YOUR
ERRAND WENT
ALL RIGHT?



ALL I COULD GET
OUT OF HIM WAS
THAT HE WASN'T
ACTING ALONE.
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID
AT LEAST. I DON'T
KNOW IF I BELIEVE
HIM. I DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO BELIEVE
ANYMORE.



WELL, YOU
GOT THE ONE THAT
DID IT. THAT'S
SOMETHING.

THANK YOU,
CAL, FOR
BEING HERE.

OF COURSE.
YOU GUYS ARE
BLOOD, PEARL,
LITERALLY AND
FIGURATIVELY.



DOC CAME IN EARLIER, SAID MORE OF THE SAME. THE BLOOD LOSS CAUSED SERIOUS DAMAGE TO HIS KIDNEYS, HIS LIVER. NOW THEY'RE NOT SURE ABOUT HIS SPLEEN EITHER.

PEARL, I HAVE TO SAY AGAIN, I'M NOT SURE IT'S SAFE HERE. IF WHAT THAT VAMP SAID IS TRUE...

PEARL?



IT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME, CALVIN. I WAS BROUGHT TO THIS SAME HOSPITAL, DRAINED AND DYING, BACK WHEN THEY FIRST ATTACKED ME. IT'S LIKE WATCHING WHAT HAPPENED TO ME HAPPEN TO HIM.

HE'S TOUGH, PEARL. HE'S GOING TO PULL THROUGH.



I DIDN'T.



HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT TURNING HIM?

HA--ONLY EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY.

BUT HE MADE ME PROMISE NEVER TO DO IT THIS WAY. BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF LOSING HIM.



STILL, THAT WAS BEFORE HE WAS LIKE THIS.



HE MADE ME PROMISE, AND I DID.

HENRY, YOU GODDAM IDIOT.

NOK
NOK



I'M SORRY
TO INTERRUPT.
MRS. PRESTON? I'M
DR. LOOMS.

WHERE'S
DR. PARKS?



I'M AFRAID HE'S MAKING
ROUNDS, BUT HE THINKS IT'D
BE BEST TO MOVE THE
PATIENT TO THE INTENSIVE
CARE UNIT IN THE WEST
WING, WHERE THERE'S
MORE STAFF.



IF DR. PARKS
THINKS IT'LL KEEP
HENRY IN BETTER
CARE.

HE
DOES,
YES.

OKAY
THEN.
EXCEPT
FOR ONE
THING.



WHAT'S
THAT,
DEAR?

DR.
PARKS IS
A SHE.



RIGHT. OF
COURSE SHE'S
MY MISTAKE... WELL,
WE'D STILL LIKE
TO MOVE MR.
PRESTON...







HENRY...

IS
HE ALL
RIGHT?



HE SEEMS
TO BE. IF YOU
CALL THIS ALL
RIGHT.



WE CAN'T PROTECT
HIM, PEARL. I KNOW
HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT
THE VMS, BUT WE
NEED THEM TO
KEEP HIM SAFE.



HOBBS WAS ALL I KNEW
BUT HE HAD TO QUIT TO
GO OVERSEAS FOR
SOME EMERGENCY
CALL.

I DON'T
KNOW WHO
TO CALL, OR
EVEN WHERE
TO LOOK.



IT'S
HOLLYWOOD,
PEARL...

"...IT'S ALL ABOUT STARS."

Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, California.

AGENT POOLE,
GOOD TO
SEE YOU
AGAIN.

PEARL, MEET
SENIOR AGENT BIXBY,
QUARTERBACK FOR THE
WEST COAST DIVISION OF
THE VASSALS OF THE
MORNING STAR.

IT'S A PLEASURE.
I'VE READ QUITE A BIT
ABOUT YOU. THE WORK
YOU DID BACK IN
THE '20s.

THAT WAS
A LONG TIME
AGO, AGENT
BIXBY.

EVEN SO,
AGENT POOLE
SPEAKS VERY HIGHLY
OF YOU AND YOUR
WUSBAND.

IS
HENRY
HERE?

OF COURSE.
I'M SORRY. THIS WAY.
MR. PRESTON HAS BEEN ALL
SET UP ALREADY. THE AMBULANCE
BROUGHT HIM IN AROUND BACK
AND HE HAS BEEN MOVED
BENEATH TO OUR MEDICAL
BAY BELOW SURFACE.

BELOW
SURFACE?

HEH, I FORGOT.
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN
TO ONE OF THESE
BEFORE, HAVE YOU?

DING

**Beneath The Observatory:
West Coast Headquarters of the V.M.S.**



IT'S A RELATIVELY NEW FACILITY. WE'RE STILL WORKING SOME OF THE KINKS OUT, AS AGENT POOLE CAN TELL YOU, I'M SURE.

LIKE THE POP MACHINE.

NUH-UH. FIXED LAST WEEK.



BUT ALL IN ALL, WE'RE PRETTY DAMN PROUD OF THE PLACE.

WHERE'S HENRY?

WHERE'S MY HEAD AT? RIGHT THIS WAY...



SEE? IT'S STATE OF THE ART. HE'S STABLE, REACTING TO THE TREATMENT FOR NOW. WE'LL KEEP A GOOD EYE ON HIM.

I PROMISE.



THANK YOU. I MEAN IT... I DO FEEL BETTER NOW.

IT'S FUNNY. I'M JUST SO USED TO HOBBS...

HE'LL BE BACK SOON.





BLOCH?

WE DON'T KNOW IF IT'S BLOCH. WE SUSPECT SO, BUT EITHER WAY, WHOEVER THE LEADER IS, HE HAS USED HIS LEVERAGE IN HOLLYWOOD TO PRESSURE HIGH-RANKING MEMBERS OF THE FILM INDUSTRY TO HIDE HIS MEMBERS IN THEIR HOMES.

YOU'VE HEARD OF "REDS UNDER BEDS"...

"UNDEADS UNDER BEDS," I GET IT, BUT WHY WOULD ANYONE LIVING GO THROUGH WITH IT?

WE ASSUME HE KEEPS THEM WORKING, KEEPS THEM STARS. THESE ARE ACTORS, DIRECTORS, PRODUCERS. WITH ANYONE AND EVERYONE IN TOWN ON TRIAL FOR EVEN LOOKING AT A COMMUNIST FLYER TWENTY YEARS AGO, YOU CAN IMAGINE THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE EASILY MOTIVATED BY FEAR.

EITHER WAY, WE HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT THIS LEADER'S COVEN HAS GROWN ALARMINGLY STRONG UNDER HIS DIRECTION. SO STRONG, IN FACT, THAT HE'S BECOMING BOLD, AGGRESSIVE.

SENDING SOME MEMBERS OUT OF HIDING TO ELIMINATE ENEMIES.

DONDO
LEACH

LIKE
ME AND
HENRY.

YES, BUT ALSO MEMBERS OF THE VMS. I'VE LOST FIVE AGENTS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS ALONE, MRS. PRESTON. SO MAKE NO MISTAKE, I'M NOT ASKING FOR A FAVOR. I'M ASKING YOU TO JOIN A WAR.



HOW?



WE CALL IT
OUR "BLACKLIST."
IT'S A LIST OF SOME
OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST
POWERFUL PLAYERS, ALL
OF WHOM WE SUSPECT
OF HIDING VAMPIRES
IN THEIR HOMES.

WE'D ASK YOU
TO INVESTIGATE
THE NAMES ON THAT LIST,
AND IF THE PEOPLE LISTED
ARE HIDING VAMPIRES, TO
ELIMINATE THOSE VAMPIRES
AND GATHER INFORMATION
ON THE COVEN.



DANNY BOYD, THE
PRODUCER, AND
HARPER HILL...

YOU WANT
ME TO JUST WALK
UP TO HOLLYWOOD
MANSIONS MYSELF,
KNOCK ON THE DOOR
AND ASK IF THEY
HAVE VAMPIRES
INSIDE?



YOU'D
HAVE A
PARTNER.



A
PARTN--

YOU HAVE
TO BE
KIDDING...

Myke 212-



AGENT
SKINNER
SWEET.



SKINNER?
BUT YOU...
YOU'RE--



DEAD?

WHAT'S THAT
QUOTE? "IT SEEMS
RUMORS OF MY
DEATH HAVE BEEN A
GREAT PILE OF
BULLSHIT."

BUT HOW
DID YOU
SURVIVE?

AND
WHY THE
HELL ARE YOU
WORKING
FOR--

MRS.
PRESTON,
WITH YOUR
TRACKING
ABILITIES...

...YOUR SENSITIVITY TO OTHER VAMPIRES, YOU'D BE ABLE TO SNIFF THEM OUT IN WAYS EVEN OUR TOP AGENTS CAN'T.

AND THE INFORMATION YOU COULD GATHER, THIS LEAD VAMPIRE, WE'RE CONFIDENT HE'S THE ONE WHO ORDERED THE ATTACK ON YOUR HUSB--

STOP.

JUST... STOP.

FOR A LONG TIME NOW, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO LIVE THE WAY HENRY WANTED TO.

THE WAY I WANTED TO...

I'VE TRIED TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT, TO FORGET THE PAST, FORGET... ALL OF THIS.

BUT HENRY IS IN THERE DYING.

AND THERE IS NO FORGETTING IT. NOT ANYMORE.

SO YOU CAN STOP WITH YOUR PITCH, AGENT SIXBY.

SO THIS MEANS--

IT MEANS I'M IN. IF CALVIN WILL STAY HERE, WITH HENRY.

THERE SHE IS. THERE'S MY GIRL.

BOOM!



SO
LET'S DO
IT, AGENT
SWEET.
LET'S
KILL THEM
ALL.

To be
Continued...

ON THE

LEDGE

Joel Rose was the first guy to publish me – way back in the day when he was running a literary mag out of a tenement on the Lower East Side. Years later, while I was still slinging steaks, still standing next to a deep fryer, he was the first guy to see the possibilities in a book of stories about the restaurant business (*Kitchen Confidential*). We've stayed friends and in touch, whatever's happening in our lives, thick and thin, over the last 30 years. He knew that I'm a comic book guy and one-time collector (early Eisner, Caniff, early '60s Marvels, '50s E.C.s, the golden age of Undergrounds). I knew that he's actually worked in the graphic novel field, having written and edited some pioneering stuff for Paradox Press like *LA PACIFICA* (with Amos Poe) – and worked on *A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE* and others. I've always loved his books: *Kill The Poor*, *Kill Kill Faster Faster*, and *The Blackest Bird*. So when he called me up and said "Let's do a graphic novel together," it took about ten seconds to say... "Hell, yeah!" What red-blooded overgrown, middle-aged boy wouldn't work on a graphic novel – given the opportunity? I figured there would be food. It's what I know – and worked with for 30 years. I'm a big admirer of the hyper-wonky Japanese manga series *Oishinbo*, and I thought right away about combining that level of accuracy about food preparation and cooking with the sort of lurid violence and beautifully inked bloodletting that I always like to see when reading a comic book. Joel and I talked about many of the things we loved: the artists, writers and films who've influenced and excited us over the years. And we threw a lot of them into the blender, added a dash of *Red Harvest*, spent a lot of time looking for the perfect artist to execute this food- and bodily-fluid-spattered fever dream – and *GET JIRO* was born. Our guiding principles were at all times "Let no man question our recipe for blanquette de veau – or our pot au feu" and "Let's make the violence really cool." In this, I think we have succeeded.

–Anthony Bourdain

One thing I'd like to clarify. As I remember it, I didn't call Tony with the idea to do a graphic novel together. For a number of years at Thanksgiving he would corner me and say, "You know what would be really cool? I have this idea..."

–Joel Rose

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ANTHONY BOURDAIN is a renowned chef, New York Times Best-selling writer of *Kitchen Confidential* and *Medium Raw*, and star of the Emmy-winning hit travel show *No Reservations*, and *The Layover*. He is the Chef-at-large at New York's famed bistro Les Halles, and the author of the crime novels *Bone in the Throat* and *The Bobby Gold Stories*.

JOEL ROSE is the author of *The Blackest Bird*, *Kill the Poor*, *Kill Kill Faster Faster*, and the graphic novel *LA PACIFICA*.

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mm SCAN

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